

DOCKET NO.: MSFT-0174/150793.01
Application No.: 09/557,250
Office Action Dated: December 31, 2003

PATENT

REMARKS

Overview of the Office Action

Claims 1-10, 12-14, and 16-27 were rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lomet (U.S. Patent No. 5,870,763) in view of Luu (U.S. Patent No. 6,324,690).

Claims 11 and 15 were rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lomet and Luu in view of Lewis (U.S. Patent No. 6,513,019).

In addition, the Examiner has noted that the Applicants must specifically “clear the term ‘application dependency information among applications’” as “Claim 14 does not mention about the dependency among with an agent executing on the system” (Office Action, page 9, lines 14-16).

Status of the Claims/Amendments

Claims 1-27 are pending.

Claims Rejected Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In order to establish a prima facie case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim

elements. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art and cannot be based on applicant's disclosure. (MPEP §§ 2142, 2143.)

Regarding Claims 1-10, 12-14, and 16-27

Claims 1-10, 12-14, and 16-27 were rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lomet (U.S. Patent No. 5,870,763) in view of Luu (U.S. Patent No. 6,324,690). However, Applicants respectfully submit that: (a) both Lomet and Luu lack any suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify these reference or to combine these reference teachings as the Examiner alleges; (b) there is no reasonable expectation of success that the combination of Lomet and Luu could achieve the results of the claims of the present Application; and (c) the combination of Lomet with Luu fails to teach all of the limitations present in independent Claim 1, 16, and 22, upon which dependent Claims 2-10, 12-14, 17-21, and 23-27 depend.

In regard to the first criteria—that there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings, and that such a suggestion or motivation to make the claimed combination must both be found in the prior art and cannot be based on applicant's disclosure—Applicants respectfully submit that both Lomet and Luu lack any such suggestion or motivation. The invention of Lomet is directed to a “method for making

applications recoverable from system crashes” whereby an “application state (i.e., address space) is treated as a single object which can be atomically flushed in a manner akin to flushing individual pages in database recovery techniques” (Lomet, Abstract, lines 1-6). However, as the Examiner has acknowledged, “Lomet does not specifically mention about the application dependency among applications” (Office Action, page 4, lines 15-16). Furthermore, it is important to note that Lomet discloses that application operations are defined that produce transitions between application states, that the application state is treated as a single object that can be atomically flushed to the stable database, and that these operations are immediately entered into the volatile log, and subsequently posted to the stable log (*see, e.g.*, Lomet, col. 6, lines 7-22). In other words, application dependency among applications is not relevant to achieve the end result sought by the invention of Lomet—the mapping of the application execution into loggable operations such that the operation can be expressed entirely in terms of the state of the application state—and thus Lomet effectively teaches away from any method in which application dependency among applications.

In contrast, the invention of Luu is directed to “[a] technique for the remote installation of application software from a source computer system to one or more target computer systems...” (Luu, Abstract, lines 1-3) comprising “instructions for deinstalling application software” because “[d]einstallation of application software is necessary for removing unwanted or outdated applications from the user's workstation” (Luu, col. 2, lines 23-25). However, the installation and deinstallation of applications has nothing to do with the state of an application while

executing (much less with preserving a pre-crash state), nor does it have anything to do with an applications dependencies to other applications *while executing*, and thus Luu is not analogous art to the invention of Lomet's system crash recovery method that is entirely directed to saving the state of an application during execution. In this regard, it is not surprising that nowhere does Luu even suggest that "making applications recoverable from system crashes" (to which the invention of Lomet is directed) is in any way relevant to installation and deinstallation of applications, and thus Luu lacks any suggestion to combine the teachings of Lomet with its own teachings.

In regard to the second criteria—that there must be a reasonable expectation of success, and that it must be found in the prior art and cannot be based on applicant's disclosure—Applicants respectfully submit that both Lomet and Luu fail to provide any such reasonable expectation of success. This is perhaps best evidenced by the fact that the separate methodologies of Lemot and Luu are in fact incompatible—that is, the combination of the inventions of Lomet and Luu would fail to produce the desired result which is to return the computer system to a previous state. The invention of Lomet is directed to restoring a computer to a specific, pre-crash state; whereas, in contrast, the invention of Luu, which merely alludes to the installation and deinstallation of software applications, employs techniques that do not in fact return a system to a pre-installation state, and there is nothing in either reference to suggest that the invention of Luu could be modified to provide such functionality.

As known and appreciated by those of skill in the art, installation and deinstallation methodologies are generally concerned with file- and file-based sharing—e.g., a DLL library or a device driver—and the necessary tracking thereof, where components are installed with an application only if the component does not already exist on the system, and components are deinstalled only after all applications that share such components are removed. Consequently, deinstallation of an application does not necessarily return the computer to a previous state because such deinstallation does not necessarily mean that all components that were installed with said application are in fact deinstalled. To illustrate this conclusion, consider the following example: Application A is installed on a system, and said application requires Library X which is not already present on the system and thus is also installed. Application B is then installed on the system at a later time, said application also requiring Library X but, since this library is already present, said library is not again installed. Finally, Application A is deinstalled but, because Application B requires the presence of Library X, Library X is not deinstalled and, thus, the computer system is not returned to a prior state because Library X (as well as Application B for that matter) are still present on the computer system. For these reasons, the utilization of the installation/deinstallation methodology suggested by Luu in conjunction with the invention of Lomet would not succeed in returning the computer system to a prior state, and thus the combination fails to provide a reasonable expectation of success.

Lastly, in regard to the third criteria—that the prior art references must teach or suggest all the claim elements—Lomet and Luu, both individually and in combination, fail to teach or

suggest the element, as set forth in Claim 1, of “registering applications loaded in said computer system with an application dependency application programming interface (API) for communications of **application dependency information among applications**, a common software agent, a storage component utilized by said agent and a backup service” (Claims, page 17, lines 4-7).

In the Office Action, the Examiner (presumably based on Applicants’ arguments presented in the response to the previous Office Action) has acknowledged that “Lomet does not specifically mention about [sic] the application dependency among applications” (Office Action, page 4, lines 15-16) and has cited Luu as providing this claim element. However, the invention of Luu is directed to “[a] technique for the remote installation of application software from a source computer system to one or more target computer systems...” (Luu, Abstract, lines 1-3) comprising “instructions for deinstalling application software” because “[d]einstallation of application software is necessary for removing unwanted or outdated applications from the user's workstation” (Luu, col. 2, lines 23-25) and, as previously discussed, the installation and deinstallation of applications has nothing to do with the state of an application while executing (much less with preserving a pre-crash state), nor does it have anything to do with an applications dependencies to other applications *while executing*. For these reasons, the Luu reference, like that of Lomet, does not address application dependencies among applications in any way that would pertain to applications while executing.

When any one of the three aforementioned criteria necessary prima facie case of obviousness is not met, said references provide an insufficient basis for a finding of obviousness. In the present case, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Lomet and Luu fails to meet not just one but all three criteria. Therefore, in light of the foregoing arguments, Applicants respectfully submit that Lomet and Luu, both alone and in combination, provide an insufficient basis necessary to render the invention of Claim 1 obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Furthermore, the foregoing analysis, although presented in the context of Claim 1 of the present invention, also applies to independent Claims 16 and 22 with equal force and validity, and thus Applicants further submit that Lomet and Luu provide an insufficient basis necessary to render the invention of Claims 16 and 22 obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as well. Finally, given that claims that depend upon an allowable claim are also allowable, and given that dependent Claims 2-10, 12-14, 17-21, and 23-27 depend on Claims 1, 16, and 22, the rejections as to Claims Claims 2-10, 12-14, 17-21, and 23-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are insufficient in view of Lomet and Luu. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 1-10, 12-14, and 16-27 be withdrawn and that these claims be allowed to issue.

Regarding Claims 11 and 15

Claims 11 and 15 were rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lomet and Luu in view of Lewis (U.S. Patent No. 6,513,019). However, Applicants respectfully submit that: (a) both Lomet, Luu, and Lewis lack any suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of

ordinary skill in the art, to modify these reference or to combine these reference teachings as the Examiner alleges; (b) there is no reasonable expectation of success that the combination of Lomet, Luu, and Lewis could achieve the results of the claims of the present Application; and (c) the combination of Lomet, Luu, and Lewis fails to teach all of the limitations present in independent Claims 1, upon which dependent Claims 11 and 15 depend.

In the Office Action, the Examiner acknowledges that “Lomet and Luu does [sic] not specifically show the limitations of claims 11 and 15” (Office Action, page 8, line 19). The inventions of Lomet and Luu have been previously described herein. The invention of Lewis, on the other hand, is directed to “[a]n integrated financial data reporting system [that] provides for real time data entry, assessment, and report generation” where “[t]he system includes message formatting, database management, and select applications for preparing sophisticated financial presentations in essentially real time” and wherein “[f]inancial institutions through the system rationalize risk, performance, and compliance positions in a cost-efficient manner” (Lewis, Abstract, lines 1-7).

In regard to the first criteria for finding a prima facie case of obviousness—that there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings, and that such a suggestion or motivation to make the claimed combination must both be found in the prior art and cannot be based on applicant’s disclosure—Applicants respectfully submit that Lewis, just like Lomet and Luu (discussed earlier herein), lacks any such

suggestion or motivation. Simply stated, the invention of Lewis has nothing to do with an application's dependencies to other applications while executing, and thus Lewis is not analogous art to the invention of Lomet's system crash recovery method that is entirely directed to saving the state of an application during execution (and vice versa), nor to Luu's invention for the installation and deinstallation of software applications (and vice versa), and thus Lewis lacks any suggestion to combine the teachings of Lomet and Luu with its own teachings.

In regard to the second criteria—that there must be a reasonable expectation of success, and that it must be found in the prior art and cannot be based on applicant's disclosure—Applicants respectfully submit that Lomet, Luu, and Lewis fail to provide any such reasonable expectation of success. This is again evidenced by the fact that the separate methodologies of Lomet, Luu, and Lewis are in fact incompatible—that is, the combination of the inventions of Lomet, Luu, and Lewis would fail to produce the desired result which is to return the computer system to a previous state. The invention of Lomet is directed to restoring a computer to a specific, pre-crash state; the invention of Luu alludes to the installation and deinstallation of software applications and employs techniques that do not in fact return a system to a pre-installation state; and the invention of Lewis is directed to an integrated financial data reporting system, and thus there is nothing in any of these references to suggest that the invention of Lewis could be modified to provide "system crash recovery" functionality when (as previously argued herein) such functionality is absent in the Lomet and Luu.

Lastly, in regard to the third criteria—that the prior art references must teach or suggest all the claim elements—Lomet, Luu, and Lewis, individually and in combination, fail to teach or suggest the element, as set forth in Claim 1, of “registering applications loaded in said computer system with an application dependency application programming interface (API) for communications of **application dependency information among applications**, a common software agent, a storage component utilized by said agent and a backup service” (Claims, page 17, lines 4-7).

In the Office Action, the Examiner (presumably based on Applicants’ arguments presented in the response to the previous Office Action) has acknowledged that “Lomet does not specifically mention about [sic] the application dependency among applications” (Office Action, page 4, lines 15-16) and, as previously argued herein, Luu similarly fails to provide this limitation. Similarly, the invention of Lewis has nothing to do with the state of an application while executing (much less with preserving a pre-crash state), nor does it have anything to do with an applications dependencies to other applications while executing. For these reasons, the Lewis reference, like that of Lomet or Luu, does not address application dependencies among applications in any way that would pertain to applications while executing.

When any one of the three aforementioned criteria necessary prima facie case of obviousness is not met, said references provide an insufficient basis for a finding of obviousness. In the present case, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Lomet, Luu, and Lewis fails to meet not just one but all three criteria. Therefore, in light of the foregoing

arguments, Applicants respectfully submit that Lomet, Luu, and Lewis, both alone and in combination, provide an insufficient basis necessary to render the invention of Claim 1 obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Therefore, given that claims that depend upon an allowable claim are also allowable, and given that dependent Claims 11 and 15 depend on Claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections as to Claims 11 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are insufficient in view of under Lomet, Luu, and Lewis. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 11 and 15 be withdrawn and that these claims be allowed to issue.

Regarding the Examiner's Note

In the Office Action, the Examiner has noted that the Applicants must specifically "clear the term 'application dependency information among applications'" as "Claim 14 does not mention about the dependency among with an agent executing on the system" (Office Action, page 9, lines 14-16). By this, the Applicants understand that the Examiner desires a clarification as to which term found in Claim 14 is equivalent and synonymous with this term as used in Claim 1 (among other places). In this regard, the Applicants respectfully submit that a single instance of "application dependency information among applications" is analogous and equivalent to the "one external dependency" that is known for the application in the first limitation of Claim 14.

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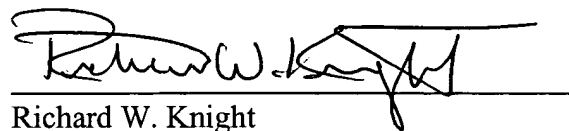
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CONCLUSION

Based on the reasons and rationale set forth herein, Applicants respectfully submit that the objections and rejections have been overcome and/or traversed, accordingly, and Applicants request that the objections and rejections be withdrawn and that the claims be allowed to issue. Should the Examiner have any questions, comments, or suggestions that would expedite the prosecution of the present case to allowance, Applicants' undersigned representative earnestly requests a telephone conference at (206) 332-1394.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: March 31, 2004

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard W. Knight", is written over a horizontal line.

Richard W. Knight
Registration No. 42,751

Woodcock Washburn LLP
One Liberty Place - 46th Floor
Philadelphia PA 19103
Telephone: (215) 568-3100
Facsimile: (215) 568-3439